

CAUCASIA AND CENTRAL ASIA

Azerbaijan was to become the first victim of Soviet expansion. On April 28, 1920, the Mussavatist cabinet was overthrown by the Communists and was replaced by the "Extraordinary Commission," composed mainly of Moslem Bolsheviks. Two days later Russian forces landed in Baku, ostensibly for the purpose of capturing the remnants of General Denikin's White army, which, routed from southern Russia, had retreated to the Caucasus. The landing had two effects: one was the embarkation and escape of Russian Whites to the Iranian port of Enzeli, to seek British protection. Together with them went the last British units stationed in Baku. The second effect was the creation on April 30, 1920, of a Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan. The new government promptly arrested all foreign missions residing in the city, sent a telegram to Moscow proclaiming its desire "to enter into fraternal alliance" with Soviet Russia "for the purpose of a joint struggle against world-imperialism,"⁷ and, on September 30, 1920, entered into "contractual relations" with Russia by concluding a series of treaties. Thus, according to the Stalinist terminology, a new state was made to benefit from "the highest form of Soviet autonomy."

During the following year the other two republics were to share the fate of Azerbaijan. Having ended her war with Poland, Russia could now concentrate on the "settlement" of the Transcaucasian problem. Her troops released from the west were transferred in large numbers to the Caucasus, ready for action. On the other hand, the Treaty of March 16, 1921, concluded with Turkey gave Moscow a free hand in Transcaucasia and assured her of noninterference on

the part of the Kemalist government.

Following this treaty the Eleventh Red Army Corps invaded Georgia and in a swift move occupied Tiflis. Simultaneously the Georgian Communist minority, aided by the Soviet Embassy in Tiflis, staged a coup and overthrew the existing democratic government. On March 21 the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia was proclaimed. The last phase was the invasion by the Red Army of the Armenian Republic, already weakened by steady Turkish pressure from the west. In April, 1921, Soviet forces entered Erivan, the Re-

⁷ Quoted from Alfred L. P. Dennis, *The Foreign Policies of Soviet Russia* (New York, 1924), p. 209.